



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS  
Washington, D.C. 20231  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/864,027	05/23/2001	Richard W. McCoy	242-140	9989

1009 7590 07/05/2002

KING & SCHICKLI, PLLC  
247 NORTH BROADWAY  
LEXINGTON, KY 40507

EXAMINER

ROYAL, PAUL

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3611

DATE MAILED: 07/05/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

**Office Action Summary**

Application No.

09/864,027

Applicant(s)

MCCOY, RICHARD W. ET AL.

Examiner

Paul Royal

Art Unit

3611

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 23 May 2001.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 23 May 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120**

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 2.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

## DETAILED ACTION

### *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102*

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

1. Claims 1-2, 4-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Belinky et al. (US 5,904,261).

Belinky et al. teaches a trailer hitch receiver assembly for towing a trailer behind a towing vehicle, comprising:

a frame member (20) including a hitch receiver box;

at least one mounting bracket (MB1, see Examiner's annotated Figure 1) carried on the frame member for securing the frame member to the vehicle; and

a utility power outlet (40) carried on the frame member (20).

Note, where Belinky et al. teaches a power outlet which is an electrical connector, it is understood to be a design choice to supply AC power or DC power through the power outlet.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Belinky et al., as applied to claim 2, in view of Witkowski et al. (US 6,171,118).

Belinky et al., as applied to claim 2, includes all the limitations of claim 3 except wherein the power outlet includes a hinged cover.

Witkowski et al. teaches a power outlet (12) for mounting to an automobile body having a hinged cover (35) to protect the outlet from the environment.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the trailer hitch receiver assembly of Belinky et al., as applied to claim 2, to include the power outlet having a hinged cover, as taught by Witkowski et al., to protect the outlet from the environment.

3. Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Belinky et al., as applied to claim 2, in view of Witkowski et al. (US 6,171,118).

Belinky et al., as applied to claim 2, includes all the limitations of claim 6 except wherein the power outlet includes a hinged cover.

Witkowski et al. teaches a power outlet (12) for mounting to an automobile body having a hinged cover (35) to protect the outlet from the environment.

Art Unit: 3611

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the trailer hitch receiver assembly of Belinky et al., as applied to claim 2, to include the power outlet having a hinged cover, as taught by Witkowski et al., to protect the outlet from the environment.

4. Claims 1-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Steiler (US 6,080,014).

Steiler teaches a trailer hitch receiver assembly for towing a trailer behing a towing vehicle, comprising:

a frame member (3) including a hitch receiver box (4);

at least one mounting bracket (2) carried on the frame member for securing the frame member to the vehicle;

utility power outlets (16, 16A, 16B, 16C) carried on the first and second sides of frame member (3); and

hinged covers (HCOVER, see Examiner annotated Figure 9).

Note, where Steiler teaches a power outlet which is an electrical connector, it is understood to be a design choice to supply AC power or DC power through the power outlet.

Art Unit: 3611

5. Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Belinky et al. (US 5,904,261).

Belinky et al. teaches method of powering an electrical device from a trailer hitch receiver assembly, comprising:

providing a trailer hitch receiver assembly (22) with a utility power outlet (40), and  
powering the utility power outlet from the towing vehicle to which the trailer hitch assembly is connected.

6. Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Belinky et al., as applied to claim 11, in view of Anderson, Jr. (US 4,936,796).

Belinky et al., as applied to claim 11, teaches all the limitations of claim 11 except powering the utility outlet with 12 volts DC power from a battery on the towing vehicle.

Anderson, Jr. teaches powering the utility outlet (12) with 12 volts DC power from a battery (B) on the towing vehicle to provide a DC power source.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the trailer hitch receiver assembly of Belinky et al, as applied to claim 11, to include powering the utility outlet with 12 volts DC power from a battery on the towing vehicle, as taught by Anderson, Jr., to provide a DC power source.

7. Claim 13 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Belinky et al., as applied to claim 11, in view of Hughes (5,766,020).

Belinky et al., as applied to claim 11, teaches all the limitations of claim 11 except powering the utility outlet with 110 volts AC power from a power inverter on the towing vehicle.

Hughes teaches powering the utility outlet (24) with 110 volts AC power from a power inverter on the towing vehicle, see column 4, lines 42-47, to supply an appliance with AC voltage.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the trailer hitch receiver assembly of Belinky et al, as applied to claim 11, to include powering the utility outlet with 110 volts AC power from a power inverter on the towing vehicle, as taught by Hughes, to supply an appliance with AC voltage.

### ***Conclusion***

8. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Young teaches an electrical coupling apparatus. Rodgers teaches a cable system for a towing vehicle and trailer. Barber et al. teaches a trailer tow interconnector. Belinky et al. '691 teaches a trailer hitch with an electrical connector. Austin teaches a trailer hitch cover and accessory components. Shoblom teaches a trailer bracket. Vance teaches a multiple power adapter interface apparatus.

Art Unit: 3611

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Paul Royal whose telephone number is 703-308-8570.

The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30-4:30.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-1113.



P. Royal  
July 1, 2002

Paul Royal  
Examiner  
Art Unit 3611

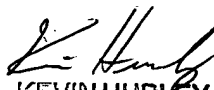
  
KEVIN HURLEY  
PRIMARY EXAMINER



FIG-1

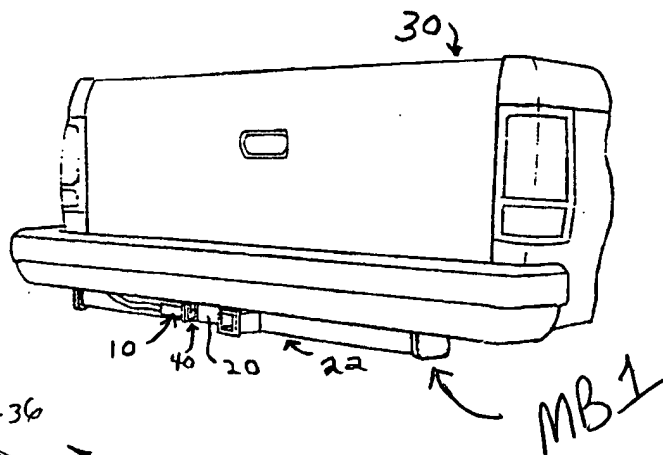


FIG-2

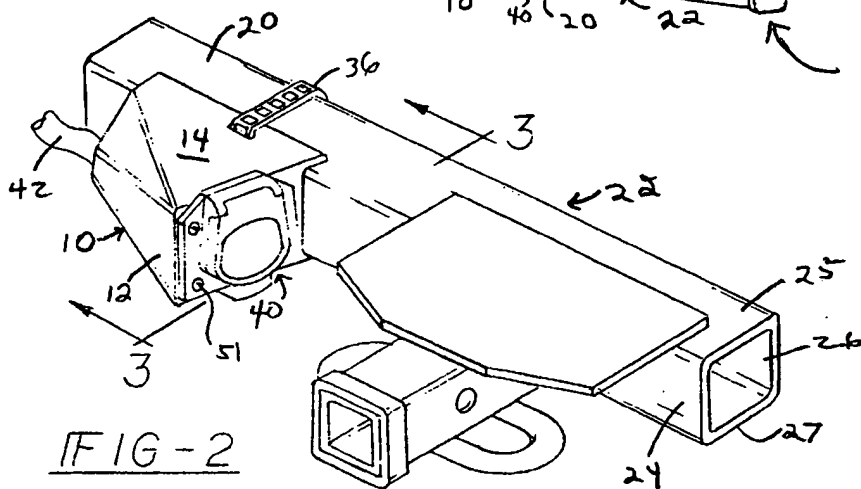


FIG-3

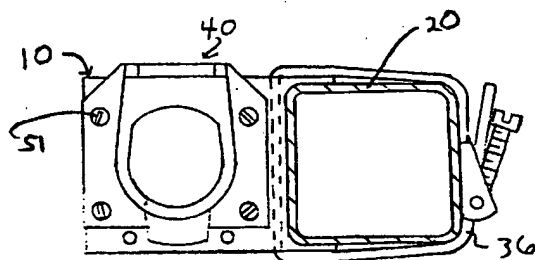


FIG-4

